A REPLY TO

The religious Scruples againſt inoculating the Small-pox.

A REPLY TO

The *Objections* made against taking the *Small Pox* in the Way of *Inoculation* from *Principles of Conscience.*

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IN A

LETTER

To a Friend in the *Country.*

By a Minister in *Boston.*

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one Thing; IS IT LAWFUL TO SAVE LIFE OR TO DESTROY IT? Luke 6. 9.

The Third Impression.

BOSTON:
Printed for *S. Gerrish* in *Corn-Hill*, and *J. Phillips* at the Stationers Arms near the Town-Dock.
1730.

To the READER.

THE following Letter was wrote and publish'd more than eight Years agoe, when the Town was in great Distress by the spreading of the Small Pox, which had not visited it for nineteen Years before; and when the new Method of receiving the Distemper by Inoculation first began to be put in Practice among us. It soon appear'd that the Hazard of Inoculation was much less than of common Infection, yet it met with much Opposition. Not a few of those who expected to undergo the Distemper, had religious Scruples *in their Minds against receiving it in this Way; and such would frequently ask my Tho'ts about the Lawfulness of it, with all the Signs of conscientious Doubters. It was certainly my Duty to answer them according to the best Light I had, leaving them then to judge for themselves. And having often done this in a private Way, to save Time and Trouble to my self and others, I published the following Reply to all or most of the Objections I then met with. I endeavoured to make the Answers short and plain, and so to fit them for common Use. The*

Reader

Reader will eaſily perceive that ſome of the Objections relate to the peculiar Circumſtances of Boſton *at that Time; and he may, perhaps, think many of them weak and trifling; yet they were ſuch as were commonly offer'd, and in ſuch Caſes the weakeſt muſt be condeſcended to.*

And now that the Diſtemper has again viſited the Town, and Inoculation *is ſtill in ſome meaſure the Subject of Diſpute, I have been applied to for my Conſent to another Impreſſion. I know of no Reaſon to be againſt it, my Tho'ts continuing ſtill the ſame, and my Opinion in favour of the Practice being more confirmed: And I think I have ſaid nothing that can offend any, but ſuch as will aſſume to themſelves the Government of others Conſciences, or will be diſpleas'd with any thing that does not agree with their eſpouſed Sentiments.*

By the beſt Information I can get, the learned and pious, both Divines *and* Phyſicians, *do more and more give into the Practice,* here *and in* England. *Soon after the following Letter was printed here in* Boſton, *it was reprinted in* London, *together with the Reverend Mr.* Colman's *Account of the Method and Succeſs of this Practice; to which was prefix'd an hiſtorical Introduction by the Reverend Mr.* Neal. *I have the Satisfaction*

to see that Gentleman *say of the Answers, that He thinks they are* clear and solid; but whether they are sufficient to encourage conscientious and tender Parents, to provide for the safety of their Children in this Way, must be left (*He says*) to the Judgment of every Reader. *This indeed is a Case I have not directly answered; nor did I think there was much Occasion for it. It has always been allow'd that Parents have a Power to act for their Children, in Things wherein their Lives, as well as other Interests, are concern'd, till they are capable to judge and act for themselves. And I believe few Parents who are clear in it for themselves, will neglect it for their Children.*

I would take this Opportunity, now that the Practice is less formidable than it was, and considerable Numbers are like to go into it, to caution Persons against acting rashly and precipitantly in so tender and important an Affair. I would advise none to go into it without a due regard to their Constitution, and such a Preparation of their Bodies as the Physician whom they consult may advise to. Much less should any dare to venture upon it till they have seriously endeavour'd by the Help of divine Grace, to get the great Concerns of their Souls well secur'd; and till they have such a Satisfaction in their own Minds, as that they can in this way as well as the other,

other, resign themselves and theirs, to the sovereign Disposal of Heaven. Notwithstanding the great and unquestionable Advantage on the side of Inoculation, You may miscarry under it; *and I can't but expect some will, if any Number take the Distemper in this way: For I don't suppose it agreeable to the Wisdom of God in the Government of Man, to grant any Means that shall be an infallible Security from Death, by such a mortal Distemper. Therefore look upon your selves as passing a Trial for your Lives, and act accordingly. While you* hope to live, *be sure* prepare to die. *And then,* If it please the King *of Heaven,* let your life be given you at your Petition, and *your Children* at your Request!

W. Cooper.

Boston, March 4. 1729-30.

A

REPLY

TO THE

Religious Scruples againſt Inoculating the SMALL POX.

In a Letter to a Friend.

SIR,

THE new Method of receiving the Small Pox by *Inciſion* (or *Inoculation* as 'tis commonly call'd) has been, you know, the Subject not only of plentiful Diſcourſe, but of angry Debate, and fierce Contention among us in this Town. And it is a very unhappy Circumſtance attending us here, that almoſt every thing that is now done or doing among us, if it be at all of a publick Nature, creates Heats and Animoſities. I am in hopes our good People will by and by be ſenſible of the Folly and

Miſchief of this, and come to ſuch a Temper as will ſuffer them to *differ* from one another, without being *angry* with one another. In the mean Time, I hope that the People in other Towns where the Diſtemper has made its Entrance, will preſerve a better Temper, if any among them ſhould put this Method into Practice.

However ſome among us may appear againſt it out of Party and Prejudice, yet there are many who are *conſcientiouſly* averſe to it, I believe; and, if theſe preſerve the *Meekneſs of Wiſdom*, they are (as a *very Reverend Perſon* has lately ſaid of them) greatly to be commended and honoured, in that they will not act againſt a doubting Conſcience.

I perceive that the Scruples and Objections commonly offer'd by People here, have ſuch a Force upon your Mind, as keeps you from going into this Method, which may, by the Bleſſing of Heaven, be your Safety and Preſervation. Now *Friendſhip*, (the Offices of which ſhould be ſacredly regarded by us) obliges me to attempt to relieve and help you, in a Matter wherein your *Life*, ſo precious in it ſelf, and deſervedly dear to me, is ſo much concerned.

For

For Satisfaction about the Method and Succeſs of this Practice, I refer you to the *Obſervations* on it made and publiſh'd by the Reverend Mr. *Colman*; having been my ſelf a Witneſs to moſt of the Inſtances he mentions.

But that which you want Satisfaction about is, the *Scruples* and Objections of a *conſcientious* or religious Nature, which are commonly offer'd by People againſt this Method. Theſe I ſhall endeavour to anſwer and reſolve, as I am able, in a few Words; and if they afford you any Light or Satisfaction reſpecting the ſame, you may communicate them to whom you pleaſe; and if it ſhould be thought worth while to make them publick, I think none can cenſure me for ſtarting out of my Line, or medling with what is none of my Buſineſs, ſince the Thing I am now upon relates to *Religion and Conſcience.*

Obj. 1. One great Thing urg'd againſt this Practice is, *That it is not lawful for me to make my ſelf ſick when I am well. Or voluntarily to bring a Diſtemper upon my ſelf.*

Anſ. To bring Sickneſs upon one's ſelf for its own ſake, is what no Man in his right Wits would do. But to make my ſelf ſick in *ſuch a Way*, as may prabably ſerve my Health, and ſave my Life, and with

ſuch a *Deſign*, is certainly fitting and reaſonable, and therefore lawful. This is every Day practis'd among People without any Scruple, in Purges and Vomits, and other Things in medical Uſe. Now, if I may lawfully make my ſelf ſick by taking ſomething in at my Mouth, why not by putting ſomething in at my *Arm*? Or, if I may lawfully make my ſelf ſick for *one Day*, why not for *two Days*, or more, as the Caſe may require? Aye, but this is to bring a *Diſtemper* upon my ſelf. I think it can *hardly be call'd* bringing it upon my ſelf, when the Caſe is ſo with me, (not having had the Diſtemper, and living in an infected Air) that I can't but expect to undergo it in a very little time. I know indeed God can preſerve me from the Infection; but when my Neighbours all round me are viſited, I know of no *Warrant* that any particular Perſon has to expect an *extraordinary Preſervation*. He that has no Reaſon to think, but that he is as liable to the *Small Pox* as other People are, and yet keeps in the Way of it, *expecting that God will preſerve him untouch'd*, however ſome may give it the Name of Truſt, and Faith, and the like, I cannot but look upon it and call it *Preſumption*. In ſhort, I can't but think, when I am in ſuch Circumſtances, that I can neither *rationally* nor *warrantably* expect to eſcape the

the Diſtemper, that it is *then* lawful for me to bring upon my ſelf a *leſſer* Degree of it, to prevent a *greater*. I'll put the Caſe thus, If I have not had the *Small Pox*, it is to be ſuppoſed there is in my Body, what I'll call the *Fuel* of that Diſtemper, and there only wants the lighting of a *Spark* to ſet this Fuel on burning. The *Air* I breath in is full of theſe Sparks; and I may expect *every Breath I fetch* to draw ſome of them in: If now it appears upon daily Experience, that by making an Inciſion in my *Arm*, and letting the Spark in that Way, the Fuel will burn with leſs Fierceneſs, and conſequently Danger, why may'nt I take it in that Way? Why muſt I needs ſtay till it comes in at my *Mouth* or *Noſtrils*, or thro' ſome of the *porous Parts* of my Body? For my Part, I think the Law of *Self-Preſervation*, which is God's *Law*, requires me to take this Method of Safety, whereby (to uſe the apt Words of another) the *Diſeaſe* is, thro' God's common Bleſſing, happily converted into a *Remedy*.

Obj. 2. *But ought we not to wait God's Time for it?*

Anſ. I think *then is the Time* Providence calls me to this Method of Safety, when I am in imminent and *immediate* Danger of the Diſtemper the other Way. Should any one go into the Practice of Inoculation, out

out of a *Bravado*, without his being in known hazard of the Diſtemper by the common Way of Infection, I ſhould not think it warrantable. But *then is God's time* for us to uſe Means of Safety, when we are in *apparent Danger* of any deadly or deſtructive Evil.

Obj 3. But 'tis objected again, *Can we not truſt God?*

Anſ. I ſuppoſe every Body will allow that the Uſe of Means is not inconſiſtent with Truſt in God; and why there can't be Truſt in God in the Uſe of *this* Means, as well as other, I cannot imagine.

Obj. 4. But, *it is a going from God to Man.*

Anſ. How! Can't we make Uſe of Men and Means in a Time of Danger without going from God? If any, like *Aſa*, look to the *Phyſician*, and *not to the Lord*, they are very irreligious and profane therein. But if any do *principally* and in the firſt Place ſeek to God, may they not then innocently and lawfully make uſe of the *beſt human Help* the Providence of God affords them? I muſt profeſs and declare on the Part of many of the inoculated, that they, and their Friends concern'd for them, have gone into the Practice, with *many Prayers* to God, and other ſuitable Expreſſions of *Truſt and Devotion.* *Obj.*

Obj. 5. But ſtill ſome ſay, this Practice looks to them, like *taking God's Work out of his Hand.*

Anſ. Indeed this Diſtemper can arreſt none without a Commiſſion from God. But yet it is not inflicted by God's *immediate Hand*; we receive it in a *Natural Way*, and by Means of *ſecond Cauſes*; and *this we do in the Way of Inoculation*, as well as of common Infection. If we have the Small Pox in either of theſe Ways, it is ſtill the Work of God: For all the ſecond Cauſes depend on and act under Him the firſt Cauſe. And, *the Application of Means natural for this or that End, is it not an Application to the God of Nature?* If God does not cooperate by his *actual Providence*, can the Effect be produc'd? For, *Who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?* What is there of the Hand or *Power of Man* in this Work, after the Inciſion is made, and the Matter apply'd? The *Work is ſtill left with God*, and we muſt wait upon him for his actual Influence and Bleſſing, even as the Huſbandman does for the Rain and Sun-ſhine of Heaven, after the Seed is thrown into the Earth.

Obj. 6. *But the Small Pox is a Judgment of God, ſent to puniſh and humble us for our Sins;*

Sins; and what ſhall we ſo evade it, and think to turn it away from us?

Anſ. I fully agree to it, that it is a ſore Judgment of God upon us for our Sins, which we have much deſerv'd: And it is greatly to be lamented that it has no better Effect upon the Hearts of Men.—— But is it unlawful to uſe Means for our Preſervation from a deſolating Judgment? *Eſpecially*, if at the very Time that God ſends the Judgment, he ſhews us a Way to eſcape the *Extremity* and Deſtruction at leaſt, if not the Touch of it. If a gracious God ſhews us ſo much *Mercy* as this under the Judgment, does it become us to *put it away from our ſelves*, or rather ſhould we not accept it with *Adoring Thankfulneſs*?

Obj. 7. But ſome have ſaid to me, *This Method tends to take off the Fears of this Diſtemper from the Minds of People; and who knows of what ſpiritual Advantage theſe Fears might be to them?*

In Anſwer to this I would ask, whether God cannot make the *Mercy* of their Preſervation and Recovery in this Way, of ſpiritual Advantage to them alſo, and by that *lead them to Repentance?* And, I truly hope, the Salvation of God beſtow'd upon ſome in *this Way*, as well as the other, will have a gracious ſanctifying Effect upon

upon them, under the powerful working of the Spirit of Grace. I was glad to see the serious Frames *some of them* were in at the very Time; how much affected they seem'd to be with the Favour of God to them; what a good Profession of holy Resolutions, some of them made. And I would take this Opportunity to call upon them from God to remember the same, and to be *daily performing their Vows.*

Obj. 8. Some object against the *Practice* because of the *unhappy Consequents* of it among us; *the Feuds and Contention, Sin and Mischief that it has occasioned.*——

Ans. Of this, I hope, I am a mournful Spectator; And it has made me sundry times ready to take up that Wish, *Oh that I had Wings like a Dove!* And I must freely declare, that I look upon that Spirit of Party and Division that is reigning among us, to be a sorer Judgment of God upon us, than the Distemper which has so distress'd us. But yet, I am far from thinking that the *Badness* of the *thing* in its self is to be argu'd or infer'd from this *Effect* of it. For does not the same Effect attend many other things unquestionably *good* in themselves; such as the building of Houses for the Worship of God, the Choice of Ministers, and of Persons to serve in the State, *&c.*? Nay, the very preaching of the Gos-

pel in the World, tho' it be the Goſpel of *Peace*, and the Goſpel of *Salvation* too, has been, and is, *accidentally*, thro' the Corruption of Men's Hearts, and under the Influence of the envious Enemy of Mankind, the Occaſion of all this; according as our Saviour has foretold that it would be, ſaying (Mat. 10. 34, 35.) *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace on Earth: I came not to ſend Peace but a Sword. For I am come to ſet a Man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt her Mother, and the Daughter-in-law againſt her Mother-in-law. And a Man's Foes ſhall be they of his own Houſe.*

Obj. 9. Some frame an Objection againſt this Practice from the *Decrees of God.* They ſay that *God has predetermin'd and fixed the Period of every one's Life, beyond which nothing ſhall protract it; ſo that if his time be come, Inoculation will not ſave the Perſon's Life.*

Anſ. But this *Argument* may as well be urg'd againſt the Uſe of *all Phyſick*, nay, even of *Food*, as againſt this Practice. I truly believe, as my Bible teaches me, that God has fix'd the Period of every one's Life; but I alſo believe, that he has done it with *a Regard to Second Cauſes*, or that Courſe of Nature which he has eſtabliſh'd; *the End and Means are determin'd together.* He that has fix'd in his own

own Counſel how long we ſhall live, has alſo determin'd, that by ſuch and ſuch Means, our Lives ſhall be continued to that Period of Time. And how does any one know, but this is to be the *appointed Means*, of their preſervation in Life?

Obj. 10. Some have ask'd, *Whether we could aſſure them their Lives in this Way?*

Anſ. It is ſtrange that any ſhould put the Queſtion! when there is none can give the Aſſurance of this, *not in the moſt innocent and common Means*, that are every Day made uſe of: Why then ſhould they demand it in *this*? I know of one who died under a Vomit. Another, whom I alſo knew, died by pulling out a Tooth; the bleeding at the Gums, after the Extraction of the Tooth could not be ſtopt, and in a little Time he died. And for my own part, as much as I am now for Inoculation, I am not at all ſhy to ſay, that a Perſon may miſcarry under it: For *God is Sovereign*, and will keep us in a Dependence upon him, in the Uſe of all Means. But if it appear from Matter of Fact, and Experience truly repreſented, that the Hazard in this Way is far leſs than that of accidental Contagion, this I conceive is ſufficient to legitimate the Practice, and juſtify any one's going into it, when there is Occaſion.

Obj. 11. *But suppose I should die in the Way of Inoculation, would it not make a dying Hour very dark to me, to think that I us'd Means to bring it upon my self?*

Ans. This is a Question, I must confess, has been the most *affecting* to me, of any that have related to this Matter. But after the most serious Consideration I have bestow'd upon it, I thus think; If a Person should die under Inoculation, he dies in the Use of the most *likely* Means he knew of, to save his Life in a Time of common Peril; he dies *then* in the *Way of Duty*, and *so* in *God's Way*: If the Blessing is denied, he must humbly resign this his frail *Life*, unto the *God of it*, *Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life.*

Obj. 12. There is one thing more said against this Practice, which I am loth to take any Notice of, because of the *Prophaneſs* of it; but it being so frequently in the Mouths of People, I cannot but name it. 'Tis this, *That it is originally from the Devil.*

Ans. Sure this is the Effect of *Transport!* I will return a better Answer to it than it deserves: If it be a *Method of Safety*, and a *Benefit to Mankind*, as hitherto it appears to be, how came the Devil to be the Author of it? Was he ever a *Benefactor* to Man-

Mankind? No: But he is *a Murderer from the Beginning*. Every Age of the World produces ſome *new* and uſeful Diſcoveries, in one Profeſſion, Art and Science or another: And if this Diſcovery be reſerv'd for our Day, why ſhould it not be accepted *in all Places with all Thankfulneſs*? In a Word, I cannot but think its Original derived elſewhere, becauſe my *Bible* teaches me, that *every good and perfect Gift comes down from the Father of Lights*.

As to that Objection, of *the Danger of others catching the Diſtemper from the Inoculated*, there needs only this to be ſaid; That as tis to be ſuppos'd, the Practice will not be gone into till the Danger of Infection becomes common in a Place, ſo there may be Methods eaſily taken, to prevent its hazarding of others that can't yet come into it. And I think there ought to be a prudent Care in this reſpect.

Thus, Sir, I have freely given you my Thoughts about this Practice, ſo *much ſpoken againſt*. I muſt now leave you to judge for your ſelf, praying God to *ſhew* you *his Way*. If you come into the Practice, I know you will not do it in *carnal Security*; for that may provoke God to deny the Bleſſing. And, if God pleaſe to give it the deſir'd Succeſs, you'll religiouſ-

ly

ly give Glory to him, not only for delivering you from *Death*, but for saving you from such a *Bed of Corruption*, as others have many *wearisome Days and Nights appointed* them in; you'll think your self the *more oblig'd* to thank and praise your *kind Physician*, (I mean the *Great One*) who has wrought your Cure by so *gentle* a Method.

I have no more to add, but my Prayers, that you and I may be made meet for, and, in God's Time, brought safe to, that World, where there shall be *no more Sickness, nor any more Death*, ; where Sin, and all the penal Consequences of it, shall be done away for ever. I am,

Boston, *Nov.* 20. 1721.

Your hearty Friend, and Servant.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAving Room left for it, I would take the Liberty to offer to your View, *a Scheme of Principles*, (which I take from that truly great Man, and bright Ornament of the Establish'd Church, *Bishop Wilkins*) in the same Way and Method as is us'd in the Mathematicks, consisting of *Postulata*, *Definitions* and *Axioms*; which

are

are indeed no other than the common Dictates of Nature, and agreable to the Reaſon of all Mankind; and which being applied to *Inoculation*, ſeem unanſwerably to juſtify the Practice, ſuppoſing the Probability of Succeſs to be much greater on that ſide.

A *Scheme* of Natural Principles.

Poſtulatum. *Every Thing is endow'd with ſuch a natural Principle, whereby it is neceſſarily inclin'd to promote its own Preſervation and Well-being.*

Defin. 1. *That which hath in it a Fitneſs to promote this End, is called* Good. *And on the contrary, that which is apt to hinder it, is called* Evil. *Amongſt which there are ſeveral* Degrees, *according as Things have more or leſs Fitneſs, to promote or hinder this End.*

Defin. 2. *The leſſening or eſcaping of* Evil *is to be reckoned under the Notion of Good. The leſſening or loſs of* Good *is to be reckoned under the Notion of* Evil.

Axiom 1. *That which is* Good *is to be choſen and proſecuted, that which is* Evil *is to be avoided.*

2. *The greater* Good *is to be preferred before*

before the leſs, and the leſſer Ev[illegible] *e endured rather than the greater.*

O[illegible] *uch kinds of Things or Events, as will* [illegible]*'y come to paſs, may fall under Computation, and be eſtimated as to their ſeveral Degrees, as well as Things preſent.* Becauſe when ſuch a Space of Time is elaps'd, that which is now *future*, will become *preſent.*

4. *And thus likewiſe is it for ſuch Things as may* probably *come to paſs.*

5. *A preſent Good may reaſonable be parted with, upon a probable Expectation of a future Good which is more excellent.*

6. *A preſent Evil is to be endur'd, for the avoiding a probable future Evil, which is far greater.*

7. *The greater the Evil is, the more Reaſon is there to venture the loſs of a leſs Good, or the ſuffering of a leſs Evil, for the eſcaping of it.*

FINIS.